

INTRODUCTION

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SUMMARY STATEMENT

THE general distribution of the coal-fields of the world is shown on the maps of the Eastern and Western Hemispheres in the Atlas. An estimate of the coal reserves in tabular form is given at the end of this summary.

The greater part of the known coal reserves of the world is found in the northern hemisphere. This is partly due to the larger land areas found there and partly to the fact that the earlier, coal-bearing portions of the Carboniferous are not represented in the southern hemisphere.

GEOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION

In the Palæozoic, important coal-deposits are found in Lower Carboniferous rocks in central Russia (including the Ural basin), in Scotland and in the Arctic islands north of Canada and Europe. The great coal-basins of western Europe and eastern North America, which contain a large part of the coal reserves of the world, are of Upper Carboniferous age. The Palæozoic coal-measures of China, India, South Africa, Australia and eastern South America are mainly Permo-Carboniferous in age. These measures have a great areal extent in China and are remarkable for their rich coal-bearing character in Australia. In Africa and South America, although large areas are found, they are not coal-bearing to the same extent as those in Australia.

Mesozoic deposits contain important coal reserves in small scattered basins in central Europe and in western North America, central Asia and Indo-China, they equal in richness the coal deposits in many basins of the Carboniferous measures.

Tertiary deposits containing coal and brown-coal form fields of importance in central and southern Europe. In north-eastern Asia they form the important fields in Japan and on the north-eastern coast of Siberia. The principal coal-measures of New Zealand and the other islands of the Pacific are also of Tertiary age. On the American continents the Tertiary is rich in coal; deposits of that age are found on the western and northern parts of South America, in central America and the West Indies and in North America, on the great plains and the Pacific slope.